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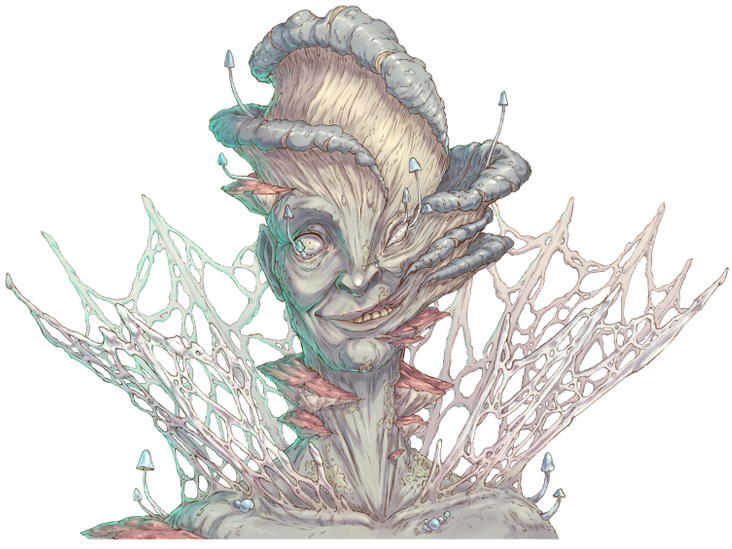
The Blight

A Pointy Hat Druid Lich



"When we think of immortality, many of us think not of people, but of the land. Long after we're dead and buried, the trees that grow on that same soil will feast on our bodies and grow ever stronger -- perennial, immortal. But no one knows how delicate the life of nature is more than the ones who guard it. Nature needs to maintain a constant balance to thrive, to survive, and it only takes someone willing to put that balance at risk for their own selfish motives to destroy it, and kill the land that relies on them to remain immortal.
Nature cannot defend itself from these attacks, but its druidic guardians can, and when one of these druids is unable to fight off the destruction of the land the druid protects, a Blight is born.

Through a particularly lengthy ritual, the druid melds both their soul and their body to the land they are trying to protect: killing the druid, creating a phylactery, and giving rise to a Blight. Unlike other liches, a Blight's phylactery is not housed in an object, or even another living being. The Blight's phylactery is called a Death Bloom, and it's not an object or a person, but a place. A place at the heart of the space the druid sought to protect, the place where the ritual to become a Blight was performed. This ritual requires such extreme control over nature that only Archdruids are known to have performed it successfully.
A Blight's goal when turning to lichdom is not to extend their own lifespan, but rather to share their immortality and, more importantly, their will, with the land they seek to protect at all costs. In melding the druid's soul with the land, they give the land a way to defend itself against its enemies. The will of the druid and the will of the land are now one and the same, and they can now fight back as one against any threat with a much darker, more powerful magic.

In a sense, both the druid and the land have achieved lichdom together, the druid becoming a Blight and the land they have decided to meld with often called a Memorial.

Memorials and the Death Bloom phylacteries at their center are as varied as the druid who created them when embracing lichdom. Lichdom transforms Memorials into places where nature grows in an unnatural way. Fungi growing tens of feet high, vines that extend for miles, or flowers that cover every surface as far as the eye can see. A Memorial has its own will, and because it is born out of a need to defend itself, it can fight back against those that wish to destroy it, with its mushrooms releasing deadly spores, its vines using their thorns as weapons, or its flowers scattering poisonous pollen. Similarly, the Blight who inhabits a memorial can manifest a semblance of their body anywhere in the memorial as a more concentrated form of defense against intruders, creating a body out of lichen, moss, or flowers anywhere in the Memorial.

When a druid turns to lichdom and becomes a Blight, they accomplish their goal of protecting the land they were watching over, but in so doing they also doom nature and anything else that isn't part of their Memorial. In order for the Blight and their Memorial to continue to live in their unlife, they must continuously grow and expand. A Blight and the land they have melded their soul with is less of a thriving grove and more a cancerous growth that absorbs anything at its border as it grows to perpetuate its unlife. It consumes and incorporates anything in its vicinity, including other lands. Thriving and diverse ecosystems get taken over and flattened into the homogenous Memorial. The Memorial remains untouched by the hands of man and any that wished it harm, but when seeing the constant consumption of the Memorial and the destruction of nature at its borders, one has to ask the Blight: was it worth it?"

Rules for Evolving Stat Blocks:

The Blight has an Evolving stat block, meaning that its characteristics change depending on where the Blight is located in relation to the Death Bloom. The closer the Blight is to the Death Bloom, the stronger the stat block will be.

- Text written in green is for abilities and characteristics that the Blight gains when they are **within 10 miles of the Death Bloom**.
- Text written in purple is for abilities and characteristics that the Blight gains when they are **within 1 mile of the Death Bloom**.

BLIGHT

Medium Undead, Any Alignment

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 187 (25d8 + 75) / 232 (31d8 + 93) / 285 (38d8 + 114)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	21 (+5)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +9, Wis +11
Skills Animal Handling +11, Insight +11, Medicine +11, Nature +7, Perception +11, Survival +11
Damage Resistances Cold, Necrotic, Poison; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks
Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned
Senses Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages The languages it knew in life
Challenge 19+ (22,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Death Bloom Phylactery. A destroyed Blight is one and the same as its Death Bloom phylactery. As long as the place that acts as their Death Bloom is intact, the Blight can reform a new body. If the Death Bloom is destroyed, the Blight is also destroyed. If the body of a Blight is killed, a new body will form in the Death Bloom in 1d5 days.

Magic Resistance. The Blight has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Turn Resistance. The Blight has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

One with the Land. The Blight is aware of the presence of any living creature that enters the memorial, but cannot pinpoint their location unless they enter the 10-mile radius from the Death Bloom.

Voice of the Land. All beasts within the memorial are under the effects of the spell Animal Friendship, and will help the Blight in and out of combat.

Back to the Soil. If a creature dies within 30 feet of the Blight while in the Memorial, the Blight regains 2d8 hit points as it absorbs its body and converts it into nutrients.

Spellcasting. The Blight casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Wisdom as its spellcasting ability (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks):

- At will: *druidcraft, entangle, speak with animals, hold person, poison spray (3d12), thunderwave, moonbeam*
- 3/day each: *counterspell, cure wounds (cast at level 4 and can heal the Blight), heat metal, lesser restoration, spike growth, wind wall*
- 2/day each: *call lightning (cast as if it was outdoors in stormy conditions), blight, sleet storm, tree stride, wall of thorns, polymorph*
- 1/day each: *contagion, hallucinatory terrain, ice storm, antilife shell, earthquake, storm of vengeance*

Death Grove. The Blight adds a +1 to all its melee and ranged spell attacks and damage rolls.

Fury of the Death Bloom. The Blight can take 4 Legendary Actions, 2 reactions per turn, and 2 Lair Actions on Initiative count 20. It can make a melee spell attack as an opportunity attack and it has advantage on concentration checks.

Actions

Might of Memorial. *Melee Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, range 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 19 (4d6 + 5) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Ray of Waste. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, range 60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Wild Shape. The Blight changes its shape into a beast of any CR that lives within the memorial. The rules that apply to this transformation for a druid apply to the Blight, unless otherwise stated. The Blight can only transform using their wild shape once a day and is unable to cast spells while in this form.
The Blight can choose to use its use of wild shape to cast any of its spells without consuming a use of that spell.
The Blight can use wild shape as an action or bonus action and can do so twice a day.
The Blight can use wild shape as a bonus action and can do so three times a day. When in wild shape, the Blight can cast spells ignoring verbal, somatic, and material components.

Legendary Actions

The Blight can take 3 legendary actions (4 legendary actions), choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Blight regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Cantrip. The Blight casts a cantrip.

Ray of Memorial. The Blight makes one Might of Memorial attack or a Ray of Waste attack.

Root Stride. The Blight dissolves its current plant form into its roots and regrows it in an unoccupied space 30 feet from where it originally was without incurring attacks of opportunity.

Wild Shape (Costs 2 Actions). The Blight uses its Wild Shape ability and moves up to its new speed without triggering attacks of opportunity.

Death Rites (Costs 2 Actions). The Blight asks the memorial to heal its wounds, healing a total of 2d8+5 Hit Points.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Blight can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects; the Blight can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.
The Blight can take 2 lair actions at the same time on initiative count 20.

- The Blight instigates unmitigated plant growth on its lair, turning the floor into difficult terrain until initiative count 20 on the next round.
- The nutrients of the soil in the lair harden the skin of the Blight, increasing its AC by 3 until initiative count 20 on the next round.
- The flowers of the lair absorb healing magic. All magical healing performed by anyone other than the Blight is halved (rounding up) until initiative count 20 on the next round.
- The dew on the leaves of the plants of the lair turns into a thick mist that covers the lair. All creatures inside the lair except for the Blight are blinded until initiative count 20 on the next round.
- Mushrooms sprout around the lair and shake their caps, liberating spores of different colors. All creatures not friendly to the Blight must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 19). On a failure, they are afflicted with one random condition until initiative count 20 on the next round. Roll a d4:
  - 1: Blinded
  - 2: Charmed
  - 3: Paralyzed
  - 4: Poisoned
- Thorny vines snake and cover the floor of the lair. All creatures not friendly to the Blight take 1d8 piercing damage for every 5 feet they travel until initiative count 20 on the next round.
- The flowers on the lair release a purifying pollen. The lair and the Blight are now free of any ongoing magical effects, such as any wall spell or a *hold monster* spell.
- The flowers on the lair absorb healing magic and redirect it towards the Blight. All magical healing performed by anyone other than the Blight is halved (rounding up) and the Blight receives the same amount of healing until initiative count 20 on the next round.
- The animals dwelling in the lair come to the defense of the Blight. Four beasts of challenge rating 1 or lower are summoned to four unoccupied spaces at the edges of the lair. The animals have one initiative as a group, but each animal has its own turn.
- The plants of the lair twist and combine to form two Awakened Trees in two unoccupied spaces at the edges of the lair. Each awakened tree has its own initiative.
- Roots rise from the soil of the lair, entangling the enemies of the blight. Any creature not friendly to the Blight must make a Dexterity saving throw (DC 19), becoming restrained on a failure.
- Two enormous lilies grow in two unoccupied spaces of the lair (the size of a medium creature). Their AC is 5 and their HP is 15. For every turn that the lilies remain on the lair, they heal the Blight for 3d4 hit points until initiative count 20 on the next round.
- Four enormous mushrooms grow in two unoccupied spaces of the lair (the size of a medium creature). Their AC is 15 and their HP is 10. For every mushroom on the lair, the Blight adds a +1 to all of its damage rolls.
- The flowers in the lair shake, liberating a gray pollen that dulls the colors of the lair. All creatures not friendly to the Blight are under an anti-magic field until initiative count 20 on the next round.

Tips on Running The Blight:

- The Blight is meant to be run as both a monster and its dungeon. Do not hesitate to use its lair actions when the heroes are traveling through the Memorial even when the Blight is not present to show that the Memorial is defending itself from the heroes. The entire Memorial is the lair of the Blight.
- The Blight as a monster has an extreme focus on its Lair Actions, with very few normal actions it can take per turn. The battle should feel like the battlefield is constantly evolving and fighting back against the heroes.
- The Blight stat block is very long, but it has been conceived to be visited and revisited at different points during the adventure to show how the Blight's powers grow the closer they are to the Death Bloom. By the time the heroes are within 1 mile of the Death Bloom, you should be accustomed to the stat block in its entirety.
- The Blight has been conceived as a monster with a lot of sustainability. Not only does it have significantly more HP than a regular lich (while still remaining well below other monsters in the same challenge rating), but it has access to spells like cure wounds, which it can cast on itself, and many other healing options through its lair actions and abilities like *Back to the Soil*.
- Some of the Blight's lair actions involve stat blocks for other enemies. Be sure to prepare those when the party reaches a point where the Blight can use those lair actions.

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